

Philadelphia United Methodist Church

Safe Sanctuaries

Information Packet

Facts About Abuse

- Abuse creates a lifetime of harm
- 90% of abusers were abused
- 90% of abusers are male
- 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before 18
- 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before 18
- The median age of those abused is 9 yrs old
- Most never tell
- 39 million survivors of sexual abuse in America today
- In 90% of sexual abuse cases, the child is familiar with the offender
- Only 10% of offenders are complete strangers
- Offenders intentionally seek organizations that provide programs for children and adolescents

Definitions of Abuse

1. **Verbal Abuse**– Any verbal act that humiliates, degrades or threatens any child or youth.
2. **Emotional Abuse** - exposing a youth/child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty; sending message of worthlessness, unloved, undeserving of love/care
3. **Physical Abuse**– Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person’s physical or mental health. [In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual’s caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual’s age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to physical health of a child or youth.]
 - a. **Neglect** - endangering health, welfare, safety through negligence; withholding food, medical care, affection, education, etc.
4. **Ritual Abuse** - physical, sexual or psychological violence inflicted intentionally and in a stylized way by someone (or multiple people) with responsibility for victim’s welfare, typically perpetrator appeals to higher authority or power to justify abuses
5. **Sexual Abuse**– Child or youth sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of same for satisfaction of sexual drives between a young person and someone older and more powerful against whom the youth/child is not capable of consenting to such contact or resisting such sexual acts. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Incest; Rape; Prostitution; Romantic involvement with any participant;
 - Any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with, or fondling of an individual;
 - Sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content, including:
 - Displaying sexually suggestive visual materials,
 - Making sexual comments or innuendo about one’s own or another person’s body,
 - Touching another person’s body, hair or clothing,
 - Touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person,
 - Kissing and sexual intercourse.

Children and Youth Protection Policies At Philadelphia United Methodist Church

1. MISSION STATEMENT

The children and youth ministries at Philadelphia United Methodist Church provide opportunities and resources for children and youth to be involved in the church's mission of creating disciples of Christ by opening hearts and minds through continuous growth, giving and change. These policies are to ensure that Philadelphia UMC is a safe and loving place for children and youth to grow in their faith and in their knowledge of what it means to be a Christian and to live out our mission. The scriptures teach that children are a gift from God, wonderful and precious and are to be guarded and guided carefully.

*Behold, children are a gift of the LORD;
The fruit of the womb is a reward. Psalms 127:3*

2. SOUTH CAROLINA'S CHILD ABUSE LAWS

Under South Carolina law Section 20-7-490, a child is a person under the age of eighteen. Child abuse or neglect occurs when the physical or mental health or welfare of a child is harmed or threatened with harm by the persons responsible for the child's welfare. This includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PHILADELPHIA UMC

A. Philadelphia UMC

As a provider of childcare and Christian Education, PUMC is responsible for the safety and well-being of the children and youth in its care. We are responsible both to the parents of the children and youth and to the legal authorities for having our facilities meet all standards of physical and emotional safety and due care.

As an employer of childcare workers and as a group of caring volunteers, we strive to protect our staff, paid workers, and volunteers from being in a situation where they may be falsely accused of inappropriate behavior toward any child or teenager in our care.

Within our Christian mission, our policies are designed to provide protection to the children, youth and the workers by striving to have no worker placed into a position where they are alone with the children or youth and training our workers so that no worker uses violent or inappropriate discipline methods. With appropriate assistance and witnesses in place, no opportunity should arise for any worker to commit any act of abuse against our children or youth and, if such act should occur, our policies will prevent such acts of abuse from continuing.

B. Staff

Staff refers to any paid full and part-time employees and all ministerial staff. Our entire staff is required to know all responsibilities of PUMC toward its children and youth and toward the workers. They shall be trained in our policies and procedures. All staff must pass SLED criminal records checks and submit to a driver's license check if they are to be transporting children. Those members of the staff and leaders of the church constituting the local response team (see Section 7, Reporting Child Abuse) or directly supervising paid childcare workers shall attend all local and district church training in child protection; shall be cognizant of their responsibilities in the event of an allegation of child abuse; and shall be fully trained in the conduct of their related duties.

C. Paid Childcare Workers

Our paid childcare workers are responsible for knowing both church policy and South Carolina law regarding child abuse and protection. They must pass a SLED criminal records check and interviews, attend child protection training and be prepared to document any incidents which may indicate the presence of abuse. They shall be required to read, understand, acknowledge and sign this policy before beginning their duties at PUMC. They are responsible for implementing and abiding by our written policies on child protection and classroom discipline.

D. Volunteer Workers in Children and Youth Ministries

Our volunteer workers in children and youth ministries are responsible for knowing these policies before being permitted to work with the children or youth. Volunteers must pass a criminal record check through SLED before they will be permitted to work with children or youth. Volunteers who transport children or youth will be required to submit to a driver's license check. Our volunteers should be aware that the potential for abuse exists and that they are part of our efforts at prevention. They are responsible for abiding by our written policies on child and youth protection and classroom discipline. Our volunteers are asked to prayerfully consider their calling to and behavior in the children and youth ministry areas before participating in the work, so that no inappropriate behavior arises on their parts.

E. Mother's Morning Out

Philadelphia's Mother's Morning Out is a ministry to the children and their families in our community and the church supports this program. We realize the value of quality weekday childcare so therefore all staff members of the program are required to know and abide by these policies. Volunteers who work directly with the children are also responsible for knowing and abiding by these policies. All staff and volunteers must pass a SLED criminal record check. As a ministry of Philadelphia UMC, all policies listed here apply to the Mother's Morning Out Program.

F. Community Groups Using PUMC Facilities

Leaders/Representatives of community groups desiring to use our facilities and who have children in their program or who require childcare must either read, acknowledge and sign our Child and Youth Protection Policies or provide us with their own policy that they are currently following before being permitted to use facilities belonging to PUMC.

G. Sub-Contract Work

The Trustees will review each contract on an individual basis and will work with the employer providing the labor on the appropriate steps to protect children and youth.

4. GUIDELINES OF CHILD/YOUTH PROTECTION AT PHILADELPHIA UMC

To create the safest possible environment of children at Philadelphia UMC, we will continue to follow all physical safety policies and will use several protection measures as follows.

A. Three-Month Rule

Philadelphia UMC requires that all volunteer church workers in children or youth programs be members of the church for at least three months or be actively involved in the church for three months before beginning responsibilities. We make every effort to place new workers with longtime, experienced leadership volunteers. This three-month rule will be waived with a FBI fingerprint check. Paid workers, while not required to be members of Philadelphia UMC, will always be supervised by experienced leaders, program staff members, or experienced volunteer leaders.

B. Worker Screening

Paid Childcare Workers: Before beginning employment, paid childcare workers will be asked to sign a Screening form containing a statement that they have never been convicted of child abuse as an adult or juvenile nor had such a conviction expunged. Anyone refusing to sign the Screening Form will not be permitted to work with children or youth. In addition, applicants for paid childcare positions will undergo a background check, including SLED and a fingerprint check, and will not be hired if they have been convicted of any sexual or violent crimes or any offense against a minor.

Volunteers: In order to ensure that we have the right people working in any area of the life of the church, all volunteers are asked to prayerfully consider their calling toward a given ministry before committing to such service. The Lay Leadership Committee, Church Council and the Annual Charge Conference also approach filling positions by first praying for the right people to do the work. In this way, we are assured that the volunteers working in children and youth programs feel the Lord calls them to this ministry and are prepared for and suited to the work.

Notwithstanding, all volunteer workers in children and youth ministry shall read, sign and comply with the Children and Youth Protection Policies as set forth by Philadelphia UMC. Volunteers will also undergo a background check through SLED.

Inactive Members: Inactive members (those who have not participated in the life of the church for 3 or more months) and persons who have moved away and then returned to the area will need to resubmit paperwork prior to working with children and youth.

C. Child Protection Training

Before beginning their paid or volunteer service, workers with children and youth will be required to read the church's Children and Youth Protection Policies and sign the Policy Acknowledgment Form indicating that they have read or have read to them and understand the policy and agree to abide by it. Persons will not be permitted to serve until the policy has been read and the form signed. Periodically (no less than once per year and preferably more frequently), training sessions related to the Children and Youth Protection Policy will be offered. All paid childcare and youth workers, church staff members and individuals (whether paid or volunteer) directly supervising paid childcare workers will be required to attend at least one training session per year. Volunteer workers in children and youth programs and members of the Board of Trustees and the Chairperson of the Church Council will be strongly encouraged to attend.

D. Adult Supervision Policies

Two Worker Rule

There should be a minimum of two adults whenever there is an activity/event involving children and youth. The goal is for workers in our children and youth programs to not be alone with children at any time, for the protection of both the children and the workers. This will be accomplished by implementing the following rules:

- Whenever possible, teachers and leaders will be assigned in teams of two or more non-related adults per classroom and for all church activities involving children and youth. This is required for all church sponsored and community groups of children or youth that use our church facility.
- When there are two related adults in a classroom, a roving monitor is required for the protection of the workers.
- There must always be at least two adults in classrooms with children below first grade, except in the case of Mother's Morning Out, where the doors remain open if no window and there is a roving staff person.
- For first grade and above in a classroom setting, when two adults are not available, the door should always remain open if the door has no glass in it.

- If a roving monitor is designated by the Sunday school superintendent, children's coordinator, youth coordinator, or other church leader, exceptions to the above statements will be allowed.

Supervision of Mixed Gender Groups

When a group includes both boys and girls, and if the group 1) stays overnight at the church, or 2) leaves the premises for overnight trips, both male and female leaders must be present.

Field Trip Policy

The provisions of these Children and Youth Protection Policies apply to all field trips under the auspices of PHILADELPHIA UMC.

- All field trips will be supervised by at least the minimum number of adults required by our policies, and preferably by more. In addition, a signed parental consent form with the authorization for emergency medical care is required for all such trips.
- When field trips are overnight events and adults must share a room with the children or youth, the adult must always have his or her own bed.
- Persons other than parents who are transporting children or youth home must be on a list of authorized drivers provided by church staff and/or parents of children.

E. Group Management Policy

Philadelphia UMC is committed to providing children and families with a safe and caring environment for learning to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Positive learning experiences enable children to develop a strong sense of self worth. The following guidelines will facilitate such learning experiences.

- 1) Effective leaders serve as role models for children/youth, showing God's love in all actions and interactions.
- 2) Being respectful of children, their experiences, and feelings, encourages children to interact positively.
- 3) Well-planned, varied hands-on, age appropriate activities provide a positive learning experience, often avoiding conflict.
- 4) Reinforce appropriate behavior with praise and ignore negative behavior unless it violates the safety of others, self, or disrupts the group process. Distraction is a very useful tool to avoid conflict.
- 5) Consistency in setting and following group rules helps maintain group integrity.
- 6) No Corporal Punishment.

If a child/youth's behavior is inappropriate, and after the above suggestions have been followed, the child/youth should be removed from the group and the pastor or other appropriate staff person should be consulted. When appropriate, the parents will be informed of the inappropriate behavior.

F. Consequences For Policy Violations

If any action is observed, not constituting abuse, but in violation of our stated supervisory or disciplinary policies, the following consequences will result.

A volunteer acting in such a manner may be **1)** taken aside by the volunteer or staff member in leadership and reminded of the disciplinary and child protection policies, **2)** approached by the Senior Pastor and reminded of the disciplinary and child protection policies, and (if necessary) counseled on appropriate anger management, **3)** removed from his/her position with the children or youth ministries and barred from participating in such ministries until he/she attends a Child Protection training session, or **4)** permanently barred from contact with children or youth ministries. The choice of consequences will reflect the severity of the offense and whether such action is a repeated offense.

A paid employee observed in the same actions may be **1)** verbally reprimanded **2)** reprimanded in writing with a copy to the employee's file, **3)** suspended from employment until undergoing additional training in Child Protection policies and procedures, or **4)** dismissed with or without notice. The choice of consequences will reflect the severity of the offense and whether such action is a repeated offense.

G. Open Classroom Policy

Classrooms or childcare rooms may be visited at any time, without prior notice by church staff, parents, grandparents, guardian, or other volunteer church workers. Staff, parents, or volunteers visiting classrooms in which Sunday School, Bible study or a rehearsal is in progress are only requested to avoid causing disruption to the students/participants. All doors that have windows cannot be covered. Childcare workers or volunteers concerned about discipline, facilities, or any tensions, injury or incident may also request a visit from the pastor or other appropriate staff person or a Trustee at any time.

PHILADELPHIA UMC POLICY AND PROCEDURE OF REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

If there should be allegations of child abuse at Philadelphia UMC, the procedures below shall be followed. Due to the serious, sensitive nature of such a crisis, and the potential harmful effects both to the child and of false accusations and unrestrained gossip, the strictest confidentiality will be observed throughout the reporting process.

In order to minimize confusion and talk, **anyone** associated with Philadelphia UMC children or youth programs **that observes or has reason to suspect abuse, should report these observations/suspicions in the following manner.**

- 1.** While in the context of the Mother's Morning Out program, any reports should be brought directly and only to the Director of Mother's Morning Out or the Senior Pastor.
- 2.** If the abuse is suspected during a children or youth program, activity, or outing, the person who has reason to suspect the abuse should report directly to the Senior Pastor or the Chairperson of Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) if the pastor either is not available or is the accused.
- 3.** If the Senior Pastor is the one accused, the Chairperson of SPRC will report the allegation to the Rock Hill District Superintendent.
- 4.** Any allegation of child abuse will be treated seriously. Any individual observing acts of abuse occurring at Philadelphia UMC or who suspects abuse to have occurred even if away from Philadelphia UMC should report the suspected abuse.
- 5.** The individual reporting the abuse shall document the incident and the pastor shall document all procedures observed in handling the allegation
- 6.** The Senior Pastor will notify the parents of the victim and encourage them to notify law enforcement.
- 7.** The Senior Pastor will contact law enforcement to ensure that the parents have reported the incident. If they have not, the senior pastor will do so.
- 8.** After the Senior Pastor has been informed, the allegations will then be reported to the SPRC Chairperson and the Church Council Chairperson.

9. The appropriate individual will perform necessary notifications as follows:

- The Senior Pastor or SPRC chairperson shall notify the Rock Hill District Superintendent.
- The parents of the alleged victim and/or the Senior Pastor will notify local law enforcement and the South Carolina Department of Social Services.
- The Senior Pastor or the Trustee Chairperson shall notify the church's insurance company in accordance with the policy provisions.

10. Individuals involved in reporting should not confront any person affected by the allegations.

11. However, if the accused has assigned duties within the life of the church, that person must be temporarily relieved of his/her duties until the investigation is concluded.

12. The Senior Minister should extend whatever care and resources necessary, but under no circumstances should the Senior Minister or any church leader or member investigate the allegation. In providing care to the alleged victim and the accused, and their families, the Senior Minister or church leader should under no circumstances be drawn into a discussion of the truth or falsity of the allegation. Do not assign blame or take any steps that involve establishing or refuting the allegation.

13. It is appropriate to show care, comfort and reassurance for all persons affected and to pray for an atmosphere of healing in the church.

14. Observe confidentiality for both the alleged victim and the accused throughout the investigation.

15. Any public inquiries will be directed to the Senior Pastor or the Church Council Chairperson.

6. POLICY REVIEW

The Children and Youth Protection Policies at Philadelphia United Methodist Church shall be reviewed annually by the Nurture Ministries Ministry Team and their findings shall be reported to the Board of Trustees and the Church Council. If any amendments or changes to this policy are required, these changes will be submitted to the Church Council for approval.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

All programs of the church involving children or youth will implement these policies.

This policy will go into effect immediately upon passage by the Church Council. All staff, paid childcare or youth program workers and volunteers in the children or youth programs will be given a copy of this policy and requested to sign the Policy Acknowledgement Form within two months of the policy effective date. Within three months of the policy effective date, background checks will be initiated on all paid workers and volunteers in the children and youth programs who have not yet undergone such an investigation.

**Philadelphia United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries
Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse**

(Please Print all Information)

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

2. Victim's name: _____

Victim's age/date of birth _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: _____

4. Victim's statement: (give your detailed summary here): _____

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family, other): _____

6. Reported to Pastor (name): _____ Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian (name): _____

Date/time: _____ Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

8. Call to local children and family service agency(name): _____

Date/time: _____ Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Call to local law enforcement agency (name): _____
Date/time: _____ Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

10. Other Contacts: Name: _____
Date/time: _____
Summary: _____

Signature of Applicant **Date**

**Philadelphia United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries
Accident Report Form**

Date of Accident: _____ Time of Accident: _____

Name of child/youth injured: _____ Age: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Location of accident: _____

Parent or guardian: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Describe the accident: _____

**Background Screening Process for Individuals Working with
Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
Philadelphia United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries**

Criteria for Approval:

- No conviction regarding a child, youth or vulnerable adult
- No felony conviction
- No DUI within the last five (5) years

Process of Approval:

- 1) Complete the release, order and report forms and return them to the Church Office to have a background screening done.
- 2) After completed forms are sent to the Church Office, an online background check will be submitted to ChoicePoint to run a national criminal and motor vehicle screening.
- 3) Results will be mailed to the church office within 10 working days. At which point the Pastor, Director of Christian Education, Director of Music and Worship Arts and a representative from SPRC will 'approve' or 'not approve' the application to be an authorized person to participate with the children and youth. An individual COULD be approved for supervision but NOT driving. (A DUI within the last five (5) years)
- 4) The Pastor, Director of Christian Education, Director of Music and Worship Arts or the representative from SPRC will inform the applicants of their "approved" or "not approved" status by phone, unless another mode of communication is designated. They inform only that individual the conditions for their decision. For confidentiality reasons, NO other individuals will see or have access to these reports or conversations.
- 5) If ChoicePoint finds something based on an individual's name, Social Security number and date of birth, then it will send the individual a letter stating what was found. When that happens, if the individual so chooses, he/she can contact ChoicePoint at Consumer Disclosure department at (800) 845-6004 to dispute its findings.
- 6) It is the responsibility of the individual who was screened to contact the Church Office to request a review for an appeal of the situation within 90 days of notification.
- 7) The Pastor, Director of Christian Education, Director of Music and Worship Arts and a representative from SPRC will mediate any appeals made on the decision. The review process will take several weeks so plan accordingly in the event that the appeal is not granted.
- 8) If for some reason the individual's status changes in any way either the Pastor, Director of Christian Education, Director of Music and Worship Arts or representative from SPRC must be notified immediately. Appropriate action will be followed after notification.
- 9) After three (3) years, another background check is required for all individuals 18 or over participating in ministry with children, youth and vulnerable adults where they have care, custody and control.

10) All records will remain under lock and key at an undisclosed location. The four (4) people that will have access to the ChoicePoint information will be the Pastor, Kevin Cooley, the Director of Christian Education, Audrey Wilder, the Director of Music and Worship Arts, Andy Faulkenberry and the representative from Staff Parish Relations Committee.

11) Contact Information:

Kevin Cooley – Pastor
803-548-0102
pastor@pumcfortmill.org

Audrey Wilder – Director of Christian Education
803-548-0102
audrey@pumcfortmill.org

Andy Faulkenberry – Director of Music and Worship Arts
803-548-0102
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Representative from SPRC